

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 4269

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PGOV, UY
SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS: GOU ESTABLISHES CHANNEL
FOR US INQUIRIES ON PRISONER CASES

REF: (A) FIVE LISTER MEMCONS OF AUGUST 18-19, 1977 (NOTAL)
(B) MONTEVIDEO 4197 (NOTAL) (C) STATE 192192 (NOTAL)
(D) STATE 222745 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. PURSUANT TO AGREEMENT REACHED BETWEEN
AMBASSADOR AND CINCS TO OPEN OFFICIAL-INFORMAL CHANNEL
BETWEEN EMBASSY AND GOU ON HUMAN RIGHTS CASES, CHARGE
(ACCOMPANIED BY ATTACHE AND POLOFF) CALLED ON JOINT STAFF
COLONEL CAMPS, SEPTEMBER 6. CHARGE PASSED LIST OF NAMES OF
NINETEEN URUGUAYANS REGARDING WHOM WE HAVE RECEIVED RECENT
INQUIRIES, REQUESTING PARTICULARS RE PLACE OF DETENTION,
STATE OF HEALTH, AND STAGE OF JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST
THEM. CAMPS STATED HE WOULD ENDEAVOR PROVIDE INFORMATION
AS FULLY AND PROMPTLY AS POSSIBLE AND INDICATED THAT
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URUGUAYAN MILITARY CONSIDER CHANNEL OPERATIVE FOR ADDI-
TIONAL INQUIRIES, WHEN DESIRED. JUDGEMENT REGARDING UTILITY
OF CHANNEL MUST BE DEFERRED UNTIL RESPONSES RECEIVED (AND
VERIFIED BY OTHER SOURCES), BUT WE CONSIDER GOU AGREEMENT
TO ESTABLISH THIS LINE OF COMMUNICATION A STEP IN RIGHT
DIRECTION. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING CONVERSATION BETWEEN AMBASSADOR AND CINCS VADORA AND PALADINI SEPTEMBER 1, CINCS MADE COMMITMENT TO ESTABLISH OFFICIAL-INFORMAL CHANNEL THROUGH WHICH EMBASSY COULD OBTAIN INFORMATION REQUIRED TO RESPOND TO INQUIRIES REGARDING PERSONS DETAINED BY THE GOU. PURSUANT TO THIS AGREEMENT, CHARGE (ACCOMPANIED BY ARMA/ACTING DATT, AIRA, AND CHIEF, POL SECTION) CALLED ON ARMY COL. HUGO M. CAMPS (ONE OF DEPARTMENTAL HEADS OF JOINT STAFF) SEPTEMBER 6. CHARGE PASSED TO CAMPS A LIST OF NINETEEN URUGUAYANS ON WHOM THE EMBASSY HAS RECENTLY BEEN QUERIED BY A NUMBER OF SOURCES, INCLUDING CONGRESSIONAL. HE EXPLAINED THAT EMBASSY WAS NOT AN INVESTIGATIVE BODY, BUT DOES HAVE RESPONSIBILITY TO RESPOND TO INQUIRIES FROM CONGRESSMEN AND ELSEWHERE IN USG REGARDING SITUATION OF DETAINED OR MISSING PERSONS. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED BENEFITS FOR BOTH GOVERNMENTS TO BE OBTAINED FROM PROMPT, FULL, AND ACCURATE RESPONSE ON PART OF GOU.

3. CAMPS INDICATED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS TO COOPERATE TO FULLEST EXTENT AND, WHILE NOTING THAT OBTAINING INFORMATION DESIRED BY EMBASSY WAS ADDITIONAL DUTY LAID UPON HIM, INDICATED HE WOULD DO HIS BEST. HE THEN PROCEEDED IMMEDIATELY TO DETAILS, ASKING WHAT SPECIFIC INFORMATION EMBASSY DESIRED ON CASES PRESENTED.

4. CHARGE RESPONDED BY INDICATING (AS DID HEADING OF LIST) WE WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING WHERE INDIVIDUALS WERE DETAINED, CONFIDENTIAL

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STATE OF THEIR HEALTH, STAGE OF JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST THEM OR, IF SENTENCED, DURATION OF SENTENCE. CAMPS NOTED THE ABOVE AND, SCANNING THE LIST, REMARKED (WITH A SMILE) THAT MANY OF THE NAMES INCLUDED WERE "WELL-KNOWN". HE STATED THAT HE FORESAW PROBLEMS ONLY IN THOSE CASES WHERE THE PERSON HAD NOT YET BEEN ARRAIGNED AND THE GOU WAS PURSUING AN INVESTIGATION, REQUIRING A DELAY OF "TEN TO FIFTEEN DAYS". IN OTHER CASES, HE NOTED THAT THE RESPONSE MIGHT NOT BE IMMEDIATE, BECAUSE OF THE DIVERSE JURISDICTIONS FROM WHICH HE WOULD HAVE TO OBTAIN INFORMATION.

5. IT WAS AGREED THAT, AS SOON AS HE HAD PREPARED WRITTEN REPLIES ON A NUMBER OF THE NAMES SUBMITTED, CAMPS WOULD RECEIVE ONE OR MORE OF THE EMBASSY REPS IN HIS OFFICE TO PRESENT AND DISCUSS THE REPLY. IT WAS SIMILARLY AGREED THAT THE SAME CHANNEL WOULD SERVE FOR ADDITIONAL INQUIRIES, WHEN THE EMBASSY DESIRED.

6. COMMENT: CAMPS HAD OBVIOUSLY RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS PRIOR TO THE MEETING AND RECEIVED CHARGE AND EMBASSY REPS IN CORDIAL AND FORTHCOMING MANNER. HE INDICATED THAT HE ACCEPTED THE EMBASSY'S INTEREST AS LEGITIMATE AND NECESSARY.

THE MINOR DIFFICULTIES WHICH HE FORESAW ARE EVIDENT ONES, WHICH RESULT FROM CURRENTLY DIFFUSED AUTHORITY IN GOU FOR HANDLING OF PRISONER CASES. HIS MOST INTRIGUING STATEMENT WAS THAT HE EXPECTED ONLY A "TEN TO FIFTEEN-DAY DELAY" IN RESPONDING ON CASES WHERE PRISONERS HAD NOT YET BEEN ARRAIGNED. EITHER CAMPS IS UNAWARE OF LONG DELAYS IN REACHING ARRAIGNMENT STAGE FOR MANY PRISONERS (INCLUDING SOME ON OUR LIST), OR ELSE GOU ANTICIPATES NECESSITY TO SPEED PROCESSING, AT LEAST OF SOME CASES.

7. THE NINETEEN NAMES INCLUDED ON EMBASSY'S LIST INCLUDED:
(A) FIVE CASES WHICH WERE RAISED BY RELATIVES WITH ARA HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISOR LISTER DURING VISIT OF ASS'T SECRETARY TODMAN (REF A); (B) FOUR CASES BROUGHT TO EMBASSY ATTENTION
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BY WOLA REP GRIESGRABER DURING RECENT VISIT (REF B); (C) SEVEN CASES RAISED WITH D/HA BY JUAN FERREIRA (REF C); (D) JAIME PEREZ CASE RAISED WITH ECA BY AMNESTY (REF D); AND, (E) TWO CASES PRESENTED INDEPENDENTLY TO EMBASSY. CASES OF JORGE MASSERA AND HUMBERTO PASCARRETA NOT INCLUDED, AS SUBJECT OF PREVIOUS, SEPARATE, AND ONGOING APPROACHES BY EMBASSY TO GOU.

8. JUDGEMENT REGARDING UTILITY OF THIS CHANNEL AND SERIOUSNESS OF GOU IN RESPONDING TO INQUIRIES MUST BE DEFERRED UNTIL RESPONSES ARE RECEIVED, AND VERIFIED BY OTHER SOURCES. HOWEVER, WE CONSIDER AGREEMENT OF CINCS TO ESTABLISH THIS LONG-SOUGHT CHANNEL AS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION AND, HOPEFULLY, AN INDICATION OF GREATER GOU SENSITIVITY TO ITS HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS.
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